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ABSTRACT

To determine the areas in which communication affects prison environments and prison inmates, interviews were conducted with 21 adult male inmates shortly after their admission into a federal maximum security institution. The interviews were semistructured, addressing such issues as (1) perceptions of fellow inmates and staff; (2) additional perceptions of the prison environment; (3) accounts of the conviction offense and prior offenses; (4) relationships with family and friends outside of the institution; (5) orientation to feelings of anger, fear, nervousness, and depression; (6) drug and alcohol history; (7) school and work history; and (8) plans for the future. All but one subject reported previous experiences in correctional institutional settings resulting from prior adult or juvenile offenses. Ten of the 21 inmates were white and 11 were black. Due to overcrowded conditions, all subjects were double bunking. Responses revealed a reluctance to bring problems and other personal issues to their inmate peers or staff. For many of the men, background fostered and even sanctioned violent modes of expression. Problems with underassertiveness and overassertiveness were also apparent. Moreover, many of the men revealed a pattern of having invested considerable time in the acquisition of unrespected and often unliked associates, a pattern which in turn appears to have perpetuated a lifestyle of crime. (HOD)

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THE NATURE, FUNCTION, AND IMPACT OF INMATE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON

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THE NATURE, FUNCTION AND IMPACT OF INMATE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON

Since the construction of the Eastern Penitentiary in Pennsylvania and Auburn Prison in New York, structures that later became prison prototypes for the western world, interpersonal communications has been an issue of utmost concern to corrections officials and scholars. Built during the early 1800's, both facilities operated on a philosophy that espoused the reformative values of silence. The consistent enforcement of noncommunication among inmates endeavored to prevent further contamination of the inmate by his peers and to encourage introspection and penitence. Early observers of these penitentiaries[1] and some administrators,[2] however, were quick to assert that silence in its most austere form, solitary confinement, was far from ameliorative but rather conducive to illness and insanity. It took somewhat longer to learn that enforced silence, in almost any form, had no redemptive effect and warranted abandonment.[3]

Interpersonal communications within correctional institutions, nevertheless, continues to be an important issue. Although contemporary penitentiaries place few restrictions on inmate communications, the nature of inmate interactions has been recognized to affect and reflect the general tenor of the prison

environment, as well as the individual adaptations to prison life, the security of individuals who live and work in prison settings, and the eventual success of the ex-offender in the community. Inmates communicate in a manner that is symbolic of the unique attributes of their environment and their communication, in turn, impacts upon the quality of their environment. Interest in the communication of inmates alsc reflects concern for inadequate interpersonal styles that may affect prospects for success upon release. The nature of these problems is varied, including over-assertiveness, under-assertiveness, lack of empathy, poor attending and listening, dependencies, an inability to discriminate helpful and non helpful communication, lack of interpersonal sharing,etc. In response, the number of programs designed to improve the interpersonal effectiveness of prison inmates has increased drammatically in recent years.

This paper presents the results of pilot research designed to review the areas in which communication affects prison environments and prison inmates. The paper presents preliminary results of indepth interviews with 21 adult male prison inmates shortly after their admission into a federal maximum security institution in the Midwest. Inmates discussed their orientations toward communicating with others in an institutional setting and revealed information relevant to more general interpersonal communication patterns both inside and outside of the prison.[4] The findings represent the initial step of more elaborate analyses

that will examine the effects of psychological and personality characteristics on communication patterns as well as the effects of communication patterns on inmate behavior in the institution.

Review of the Literature

Early exploratory studies of prison settings viewed inmate communications in the context of a prison subcultural normative system. The inmate social system, according to these accounts, adheres to a code of loyalty that opposes the staff and formal rules of the institution.[5] In addition to taking a distinctive stand against the formal rules of the prison, the inmate culture evidences a language or argot that is functional to the prison and the problems encountered while living there.[6] Inmates adapting to this style are considered "prisonized".

According to Sykes, the most respected role that one can assume in this environment is that of "the real man."[7] The admired attributes of the "real man" pertain primarily to the manner in which he communicates. He responds to the stresses of prison life with dignity and composure, speaking slowly and deliberately, and showing no emotion. He "plays it cool" by displaying neither compliance nor defiance to prison officials or fellow inmates. He is his own confidant; no one is expected to give ear to his problems.

In contrast, Sykes portrays other inmates who by their communication styles have been relegated to less respected positions on the institutional social hierarchy. They include: 1) the "rat" who betrays his fellow inmates to prison officials; 2) the "center man" who identifies with the correctional staff, communicating mostly with them rather than with his fellow inmates; 3) the "merchant" who uses language primarily for manipulation and unfair personal gain; 4) the "punk" whose communication style is passive and inadequate to the task of preventing personal exploitation; and 5) the "ball buster" who, neglecting any semblance of discretion, foolishly, blatantly, and often violently defies institutional authority.

Others have since debated the origins of the prison subculture and the notion of prisonization.[8] In addition, some have argued that the patterns cited by Sykes and others may vary on an individual level according to the proximity to one's release date[9] or self-esteem[10] or on an organizational level according to the coersiveness of the environment.[11] There does appear to be some stability to Sykes' observations about the communication patterns of men in prison, however. More recent studies reveal a preference among adult male maximum security inmates for an independent coping style. Research conducted in Great Britian by Richards[12] and replicated in the United States by Flanagan,[13] for example, found that the majority of inmates adhered to the "real man" perspective in dealing with the problems of prison life. In response to the overwhelming majority of the problems considered,

the majority of inmates believed it best to handle their problems by themselves rather than to address them to staff or fellow inmates. In addition, the second largest group in Richard's study indicated that they would discuss a problem with a relative or friend outside of the institution. The second largest group among the inmates studied by Flanagan (which nevertheless represented a distinct minority of the inmates) said that they would discuss some of their problems with fellow inmates. However, they were more likely to offer this response to a problem relevant to prison routine than to a more personal deep-seated issue relevant to life either outside of or inside of the institution. Flanagan cited the reasons for not discussing problems with staff as follows: 1) a belief that one should not "cross the line"; 2) a fear of loosing the respect of one's fellow inmates; and 3) a feeling that the correctional staff was generally not approachable. Those who believed that fellow inmates should not be consulted, offered such reasons as: 1) a desire to avoid burdening one's peers; 2) a belief that one has no friends per se in a prison--only "associates";and 3) a conviction that important things should be kept to oneself.[14]

This staunch independence as well as the tendency to adhere to the norms of the prison subculture appears to be somewhat unique to captive populations.[15] Most "total institutions",according to Goffman,[16] foster a dependency and personal ineffectiveness that most certainly affects interpersonal communications. Most notably concentration camps[17] and mental hospitals[18] evidence a

process referred to as deindividualism, institutionalization, social breakdown, or a tendency to identify with one's captors, to become dependent upon the institutional culture and to loose the self-sufficiency needed to survive outside of the institution. In contrast, Wulbert suggests that prison inmates exhibit higher levels of self-esteem.[19] Research conducted by Chang and his associates furnishes support for this assertion. In this study, inmates positioned themselves relatively high (fourth out of thirteen ranks) on a hierarchy of social roles that included priests, ministers, doctors,other people in general, students, inmates in general, lawyers, etc. Interestingly, the inmates positioned "inmates in general" at the lowest level of the hierarchy, showing an obvious lack of respect for their peers and an ability to define themselves in a respectable position appart from the inmate body.[20] The research conducted by Chang et al., Richards, and Flanagan also stresses the fact that interactions among prison inmates do not approximate friendship. Thus, while subcultural norms of loyalty may be present, they pertain primarily to a shared opposition to the formal authority of the institution in the absence of any friendship bonds to fellow inmates.[21]

The observations noted above describe a rather stark interpersonal environment, suggesting that interpersonal communications between inmates and staff is kept to a distinct minimum while communications among inmates is often somewhat perfunctory. It is likely that the void caused by the distance

that one places between self and others is filled by people outside of the institution, or at least it is in the minds of the inmates. Both Flanagan and Richards found that the main problem indicated by the inmates studied was that they missed a specific person on the outside.[22]

"Missing someone" while living in an environment that does not address that void is a communication issue that ought to be carefully assessed for its impact at the individual level. Toch's data, interviews with 418 inmates in five maximum security institutions throughout New York State, tempers exaggerated adherence to the "real man" perspective. A substantial portion of the inmates interviewed evidenced environmental concerns relevant to a need to interact with others. These included concerns/desires for: 1)support or assistance in self-improvement efforts; 2)emotional feedback or relationships that furnish intimacy, empathy, and emotional sustenance; and 3) social stimulation, interaction, companionship and gregariousness.[23] It is important to stress that these concerns were expressed to an interviewer who was not affiliated with the institution.

Much of the material presented to this point suggests that prisons furnish few opportunities to meet these needs and that thoughts of significant others on the outside, or occasional interactions with these people, constitute the predominant coping strategy for dealing with these problems. Research pertaining to the stability of relationships with people on the outside, however, casts a tragically ominous tone to this issue. Those

who probably provide the most support and are a source of intimate communication, at least in the eyes of the inmate, often do not play this desperately needed role for long. Studies suggest that relationships, especially with spouses and girl friends, deteriorate over time for a substantial portion of inmates. Relationships with parents, however, seem somewhat more stable.[24] Inmates studied by Brodsky were unrealistically self-protective on this issue. Many did not acknowledge the deterioration of their relationships with people on the outside, indicating, instead, that they were involved in stable, meaningful relationships with others who were not affiliated with the institution.[25]

Concern for the decreased involvement with those on the outside as well as the effects of life in a total institution has led some to explore the extent to which prison inmates experience the "institutionalization","institutionalism", or "institutional neurosis"referred to above. All of these terms describe apathetic states, lack of motivation, a dependency on the institutional structure, and general deterioration.Although it is believed that this phenomina is not as prevalent among prisoners as it is in mental hospitals, concentration camps, etc., it is present to some degree in prisons. Sapsford, for example, found significant changes in scores on the social introversion scale of the MMPI, as well as the acquisition of institutionalization traits among a smaller portion of the inmates in his study.[26] Moreover, laboratory studies of personality and autonomic

reactions to stress among prison inmates show increased passivity, anxiety, and depressive-like autonomic reactions to be a by-product of coercive, stressful situations.[27] Finally,the "institutionalized" inmate, the individual who returns to the institution from parole sometimes claiming that he just "can't make it out there", is a legendary, albeit uncommon, character in the penology literature.

Over-identification with the institution and its personnel, when present, appears to be a dysfuntional orientation. In research that classified inmates on prisonized vs. institutionalized dimensions, for example, Goodstein found that prisonized inmates experienced a better post-release adjustment than institutionalized inmates.[28] Such findings counter those suggesting that prisonization adversely affects chances of successful readjustment.[29] Goodstein asserts that inmates retain identity and control in the process of rejecting their captors; this, in turn, fosters autonomy upon release and results in a more successful reintegration into society.

In contrast to the acquiescent,"good inmate", a number of sources refer to the over-assertive communication patterns of another type of inmate. The home environments of such inmates fostered a type of "action language" that conveys even the most innocuous thought in a manner that evidences violent overtones. Such inappropriate interpersonal behavior begets more action language and is often the precursor of violent behavior.[30] Hans Toch's portrayal of these individuals is especially insightful:

> Violent men play violent games because their repertoire is restricted. Even when a violent person is aware of what he does, he rarely knows what he could do instead. In fact, such a man frequently assumes that violence is the only means available to achieve his objectives.[31]

Although there seems to be a general belief that correctional clients have some difficulty expressing their needs in a straightforward manner, the problem is a differential one. While some studies find prison inmates more over-assertive than non-prison inmates,[32] there are nevertheless numerous inmates who can be characterized as underassertive.[33] Certainly the "institutionalized" inmate, described above, displays an underassertive style of interpersonal communications.

Assertiveness patterns have an unquestionable bearing upon events in the institution and adjustment outside of the institution. The under-assertive inmate, as stated above, may be less amenable to a successful post-release adjustment than the assertive inmate. Moreover, inmates characterized as extremely under-assertive are more likely to fall prey to the exploitation of their fellow inmates than those who are assertive or over-assertive. Over-assertiveness, on the other hand, affects more violent behavior within the institution. Unfortunately, violent displays of over-assertive behavior seem to be an unavoidable fact of prison life. Bowker's discussion of this issue focuses on the widely held assumption that one must counter

threats aggressively. This principal and the knowledge of the dangers of prison life serves to escalate the level of violence in the prison, as inmates respond in a tried and true but nevertheless violent manner to real or perceived threats.[34] In contrast, the dysfunctional effects of over-assertiveness for the ex-offender on the outside seem obvious. Over-assertiveness is a noted component of other psychological disorders[35] and an obvious precursor to violent behavior and poor reintegration to family, work, and other social settings.

Another interpersonal communications problem affecting apparently the vast majority of prison inmates concerns their willingness to discuss personal matters with others. Self-disclosure is believed to be related to general mental health[36] since it is relevant to the trust one places in others as well as one's ability to form intimate relationships and to receive important feedback from others. When self-disclosure is lacking to an extreme degree, as it is with persons diagnosed with severe character disorders, it is also believed to block growth and change.[37] It is important to stress,however, that our knowledge of prison inmates suggests that many inmates are not self-disclosing while living in prison settings. Thus, it may not be accurate to describe prison inmates as not having the potential for self-disclosure, but rather they lack the opportunity for self-disclosure. Further research is needed to determine whether the limited self-disclosure evidenced by inmates is a generalized personality trait or a situational

adaptation to prison life. An equally important question concerns the impact of reduced opportunities to trust others and discuss personal issues with others? Does reduced opportunitities for self-disclosure,in other words, produce the same mental health and adjustment problems for the individual who has been self-disclosing in the past but currently lacks opportunity as it does for the individual who has never communicated in a self-disclosing manner?

Inmate communication styles have also been observed to demonstrate a lack of concern for others. Inmates are thus recognized for their failure to show empathy for others and for their poor perspective on the needs and feelings of others. This characteristic has been cited as a causal element in the etiology of their criminal careers[38] and often results from backgrounds that afforded limited opportunities for role-taking in interactions that presented the perspective of others.[39] Thus, an ability to develope and demonstrate concern for others has an adverse effect upon the manner in which one functions interpersonally.[40]

One final communication problem concerns the more technical qualities of speech and hearing of prisons inmates. During the early 1970's, the American Speech and Hearing Association's Task Force on Speech Pathology/Audiology Service Needs in Prison observed a substantially higher prevalence of speech, hearing and language disorders among inmates than among the general population.[41] The Task Force asserted that these problems occured

coterminously with poor educational performance, learning disabilities, reduced job opportunities, and general poverty. The technical qualities of speech and hearing seldom receive consideration in the literature pertaining to prison communication styles, however.

Concern for the importance of interpersonal communications and relationships is reflected in recent correctional programming. Numerous programming options address such goals as empathy training,[42] self-disclosure,[43] role-playing,[44] interpersonal skills,[45] human relations,[46] etc. The evaluation results of these efforts have been somewhat promising.[47]

In conclusion, the importance of communication patterns and problems in maximum security institutions for males has been recognized at both the aggregate and the individual level. This is not to assert, however, that conclusive data pertaining to this problem are currently available. In fact, few of the studies cited above address the notion of communications per se. Most were studies of other issues in which implications for communications could be extracted. Moreover, the few studies that directly examine the issue, are conceptually too narrow for the nature of the problem. Indeed, adequate study of the issue of interpersonal communications must consider a broad array of related factors. Research that simultaneously addresses current inmate styles in comparison to pre-institutional communication patterns with family, friends, authority figures, etc., for example, could not be found. Similarly, an empirical examination

of the impact of psychological and personality factors on communication was not available. Finally, we appear to be lacking conclusive empirical validation of the manner in which we "think" inmates are communicating. Many of the observations cited above represent conjecture rather than measurement and most fail to convey information pertaining to the prevalence of a given communication problem or characteristic.

The results presented below attempt to examine the diverse issues pertenant to interpersonal communications in prison settings. At this point in time, they are the results of a pilot phase of the research. Therefore, they have some descriptive value, but they also identify areas where improvement in the research methodology is needed. The final section of the paper discusses the next phases of the analysis.

Methodology

The data reported in this paper are being collected as a part of a larger cross-classification study designed to examine several diagnostic systems for classifying prison inmates. During the present pilot phase, indepth interviews were administered to 21 adult inmates between August, 1983, and March, 1984. These subjects were randomly selected and interviewed during the first month following their admission into a maximum security Federal

penitentiary in the Midwest.

All but one subject reported previous experiences in correctional institutional settings resulting from prior adult or juvenile offenses. Sentences for these inmates ranged from three to fifteen years. Ten of the 21 inmates interview were white, and 11 were black. Due to overcrowded conditions, all subjects were "double bunking".

The interviews were semi-structured, addressing such issues as: 1) perceptions of fellow inmates and staff; 2) additional perceptions of the prison environment; 3)accounts of the conviction offense and prior offenses; 4) relationships with family and friends outside of the institution; 5) orientation to feelings of anger, fear, nervousness and depression; 6) drug and alcohol history; 7) school and work history; and 8) plans for the future. The length of the interviews ranged from two and one half hours to three and one half hours. Research task for the larger cross-classification study and subsequent analyses of the communication data also include corroborative record data as well as the following psychological data: 1)MMPI profiles; 2) Megargee and Bohn's MMPI-based inmate typology;[48] 3) Quay's Behavioral Classification for the Adult Male Offender;[49] 4) Conceptual Level;[50] 5) Interpersonal Maturity Level;[51] 6) Moral Development;[52] and 7) ratings and indices on several relevant personality and attitudinal dimensions.

The data reported in this paper consist of interview ratings on

variables that describe inmates interactions with others in and out of prison. They include: 1) desire and willingness to communicate with other inmates and staff; 2) interactions with the cell mate; 3) expression of feelings and coping strategies; 4) nature of past and present communications with authority figures, family, and friends; 5) extent of contact with others outside of the institution; 6) past and present evidence of violent communication modes; 7) concern and empathy for others; and 8) communication characteristics during the interview.

Items were constructed in both an inductive and a deductive manner, tapping both the issues raised in the preceding review of the research literature and reflecting unanticipated yet insightful observations offered by the subjects. Assessments of the reliability of the individual rating items are currently underway. Interview protocols are being rated by the author and a research assistant and percentage of agreements are being computed. Items that are considered to be unreliable at this time (percent inter-rater agreement < 70%) are marked on Tables 1,2, and 3 below. In keeping with the pilot nature of this research, the source of several of the reliability problem has been identified. Thus, it is likely that most of the problems can be corrected by restructuring either the item, itself, or by revising certain interview questions. Further study will attempt to improve the reliability of these items by restructuring either the item,itself,or revising certain interview questions.

Results

Institutional Patterns

Table 1 shows the frequency and percent distribution of inmates across variables describing interpersonal interactions while in the institution. In general, the data support the "real man" orientation observed by Sykes and others. These data, in other words, profile an inmate who carefully selects his prison "associates" (seldom friends) and keeps conversation to a very superficial level. Only a distinct minority of the men interviewed appeared receptive to more open forms of communication. Only 4 inmates, for example, believed that their cell mate could be trusted with more than "small talk." As an interesting aside, 3 of the more open inmates were involved in religious programs in the prison. These men did not appear reluctant to refer to other staff or inmates in the program as friends.

Table 1 About Here

Clearly, discussions with staff, unless absolutely necessary (e.g., to handle certain administrative details with the case worker, obtain work assignments, etc.), were to be avoided. The reason offered most frequently sighted the fear of being accused

of "snitching" by fellow inmates who may observe the interaction with the staff person. In addition, some of the inmates related a negative impression of the staff as individuals who didn't want to speak with them for any reason. The inmates willingness to seek help from others is an important dimension to this inquiry. As Table 1 show, however, ratings of these items are not currently considered to be reliable. This is primarily the fault of the interview and points to a need to slightly modify some of the questions.

A majority of the inmates interviewed indicated that they would respond with physical violence if provoked by another inmate. Such behavior, however, was often qualified as a strategy of last resort, since many of the inmates indicated that they would first "talk things out" rather than be too quick to hit. Thus, only one inmate was rated as over-assertive.

A closely related issue concerns the manner in which inmates express anger in the insitution. As reported in Table 1, most inmates stated that they would express anger no differently than they would on the streets. The types of differences identified by the 7 inmates who noted a different mode of behavior included acknowledgment of the inability to turn to drugs or alcohol as a coping strategy. Other inmates indicated that they believed that they could not be as quick to show/express their anger in the institution as they could be on the streets.

The interview was not originally designed to assertain whether

or not inmates were using the prison setting as an opportunity to form useful criminal liaisons, acquire crime-related skills, etc. Several inmates addressed this spontaneously, however, and there are now questions in the interview that tapp this issue. Thirteen inmates indicated that discussions of criminal exploits and attempts to form criminal liaisons are common. In fact, 9 inmates stated that they had met people during prior prison terms with whom they engaged in criminal activity after their release. The 13 inmates who expressed the intent of avoiding such discussions offered reasons such as: 1) they found the subject boring; 2) they anticipated future changes away from a criminal lifestyle and felt it best to stay way from discussions of criminal activity; or 3) discussions with an ongoing criminal element didn't look good to those who would have some influence on the inmate's release.

The interview also was not designed to obtain information on homosexuality, reasoning that much of the data obtained would be of questionable validity. However, 12 inmates stated that they were very cautious and resentful of the homosexuals in the prison and were making a concerted effort to avoid them.

All but one of the inmates interviewed stated that no relatives lived within a reasonable distance of the penitentiary, thereby indicating that it would be difficult for family members to visit. Of the 9 men who said that family members would be visiting, only two indicated that they expected to receive more than two visits per year. Moreover, 9 inmates revealed that they

did not want visits from friends or relatives. In most instances distance and cost explained these feelings. Three inmates, however, stated that they were ashamed of their situation and did not want family members and friends to observe them in their present environment. Still, the overwhelming majority of inmates were in some, though occasionally minimal, contact with parents, siblings and children.

Patterns Outside of the Institution

Table 2 generally shows that this group of inmates admit to a number of problems in communicating with others while in the non-institutional environment. Most notably, approximately one half of the inmates interviewed revealed that they occasionally behaved violently with family and friends on the outside. In addition, 10 inmates stated that they had been physically abused in their childhood homes. Most frequently, the communication problems, violent or otherwise, involved the inmate's father, during the childhood years, and the inmate's wife or paramour in more recent years.

Table 2 About Here

Fifteen inmates reported involvement in some type of primary relationship outside of the institution. Fourteen of these relationships included intimate relationships with a wife, paramour, or girlfriend whom 9 of the 14 men expected to return

to upon their release. The reliability problems incurred in rating these items are due to the composite nature of the item; raters were asked to consider too much information on each of the relevant items. Presumably, the problem can be corrected by the addition of several more precise items, since the interview material on this issue is extensive.

In describing their friends outside of the prison, 16 inmates spontaneously discriminated between friends and associates. The distinction between the two is important: 1) friends were generally somewhat idealized figures who could be trusted and "would do anything for you"; 2) most inmates reported having few friends, even when family members were included among their friends; 3) associates were people who the inmate knew and sometimes "worked with" or"traveled with"; and 4) associates could not be trusted. Associates, in spite of the extensive amount of time and involvement invested in them, were often neither liked nor respected.

Finally, only 7 inmates were rated as evidencing assertive behavior outside of the institution. The remainder revealed: 1) passive-aggressive tendencies, or a general failure to confront troubling situations until they were too angry to deal with them in a rational manner; or 2) underassertive styles (e.g., "I walk away when people make me mad" or "I just can't say 'no' when I should"; or 3) over-assertive styles, meeting many of their needs in a forceful manner).

Communication Patterns Evidenced During the Interview

The items reported in Table 3 are general clinical assessments of the inmates' responses to a variety of questions. It is apparent that reliability problems affect several items reported in this section. This is somewhat understandable due to the clinical nature of most of the assessments. More extensive training of the raters and more detailed definitions of some of the items are expected to correct this situation.

Table 3 About Here

Most of the inmates evidenced average or articulate conversational abilities. Some inmates were less open to their feelings of fear(N=10), anger(N=7), and 7 inmates were rated as generally not oriented or minimally oriented to self-disclosure. When inmates evidenced concern for others, it was most often for close family members. Empathy, or an ability to understand others who were not like the inmate was only demonstrated by seven inmates.

Most of the respondents seemed comfortable and interested during these somewhat lengthly interviews. In fact, difficulties seldom involved inmates who were inarticulate or not interested in talking. More often, the responses were verbose and required

occasional interviewer prompting to keep to the subject matter of the interview. The fact that it was not unusual for subjects to indicate that they appreciated the opportunity to tell someone about themselves is perhaps a communication issue in itself.

Conclusion

Definitive conclusions are not warranted at this time, nor are they in keeping with the intent of this phase of the research. Suffice it to suggest that the data offer some support for issues raised earlier. Inmates in this sample revealed a reluctance to bring problems and other personal issues to their inmate peers or to staff. This mode generally fits Sykes model of the "real man". Behavior throughout the interview, however, contrasted sharply with this cautious orientation since most of the inmates were willing to speak in a self-disclosing manner. The institutional environment obviously imposes stifling concerns for one's safety as well as a desire on the part of the inmates to acquire an institutional record that impacts favorably upon the release decision. Moreover, in support of Chang and his associates, the institution houses people whom inmates simply do not like.

The data also furnish preliminary and tentative programmatic implications in support of programs to address problems in

interpersonal relations. For many of the men interviewed to date, background have fostered and perhaps even sanctioned violent modes of expression. Problems with under-assertiveness and over-assertiveness were also apparent. Moreover, many of the men revealed a pattern of having invested considerable time in the acquisition of unrespected and often unliked "associates", a pattern which in turn appears to have perpetuated a lifestyle of crime. Concern for relationships with those on the outside should also not fail to note that, realistically or not, inmates are placing intense reliance upon the presence of and stability of intimate relationships with someone on the outside. Only three inmates, however, acknowledged the distinct possibility that the long period of incarceration would result in the termination of the relationship.

These issues will receive continued study in the months ahead. Future data collection tasks will involve attempts to correct reliability problems discovered during this pilot phase. Additional tasks will result in index construction and other data reduction methods. Finally, this preliminary analysis also suggests the collection of additional details such as: the extent and manner in which inmates seek help, their willingness to find alternatives to violent confrontations with fellow inmates, the identification of inmates who are able to form associations with people from their home cities, and the extent of contact with friends and family,etc.

The relationship between certain psychological classification

categories and some of the communication/interpersonal issues addressed in this paper will also be examined. The main purpose of the larger research project is to assess the efficacy of several well-known classification systems for use in maximum security institutions for adult males. One question pertenent to this inquiry concerns the treatment implications of the respective systems. In other words, are there diagnostic correlates of the data presented above? If so, the case for using personality-based classification systems in adult as well as juvenile facilities is strengthened.

Footnotes

[1] G. de Beaumont and A. de Tocqueville, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France* (Philadelphia: Francis Lieber, 1833).

[2] B. McKelvey, *American Prisons: A History of Good Intentions* (Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1977), p.14.

[3] McKelvey, p.250.

[4] This research is a substudy of a larger cross classification study that examines the viability of five classification systems for use among male adult prison inmates.

[5] D. Clemmer, *The Prison Community* (New York, NY: Rinehart & Co., 1940), p.8; S. Wheeler, "Socialization in Correctional Communities," *American Sociological Review*, 26(1961), 697-712; G. Sykes, *The Society of Captives* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), p.84-87.

[6] Sykes, p.85.

[7] Sykes, p.99-102.

[8] This debate essentially questions whether prisonization is the result of the deprivations of prison, as Clemmer, Sykes, and others suggest, or whether, instead, it is the embodiment of a lifestyle that inmates bring or import into the prison. For accounts of the "importation model", the reader is referred to: J. Irwin & D. Cressey, "Thieves, Convicts, and the Inmate Culture," *Social Problems*, 10(1962), 142-155; C. Wellford, "Factors Associated with the Adoption of the Inmate Code," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, 58(1967), 197-203; and C. Thomas, "Toward a More Inclusive Model of the Inmate Contraculture," *Criminology*, 8(1970), 251-262. Moreover, some sources maintain that a model integrating both the deprivation model and the importation model provides the most adequate explanation of the prisonization process. See R. Huff, "Inmate Stratification: Some Policy Implication for Correctional Administrators and Staff," *Corrective and Social Psychiatry and Journal of Behavior Therapy*, 20(1974), 9-14; and C. Thomas, "Theoretical Perspectives on Prisonization: A Comparison of the Importation and Deprivation Models," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 68(1977), 135-145. Finally, at least one source asserts that the resolution of the argument is probably worth very little. See G. Hawkins, *The Prison* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp.63-71.

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Table 1 Frequency and Percent Distribution of Inmates by Institutional Communication Patterns

Variable	N	Percent
Orientation Toward Relationships Formed Within the Institution[b]		
Isolationist	3	14
A few carefully chosen associates and friends	13	62
Numerous carefully chosen friends and associates	5	24
* Willingness to Seek Help From Anyone in the Institution[b]		
Not willing	6	30
Might be willing	7	35
Willing	7	35
* Perception of a Desire on the Part of Anyone in the Institution to Help the Inmate[b]		
Yes	8	38
No	13	62
* Who Will Problems be Discussed With[b]		
Self	12	57
Other inmates	0	0
Psychology/counselling/clergy staff	1	5
Staff in general	1	5
Staff and inmates	7	33
Will Violence Be Used, If Necessary[b]		
Yes	16	76
No	5	24
Evidence of Past or Present Formation of Criminal Associates[b]		
Yes	9	47
No, but opportunity is acknowledged	4	21
No	6	32
* Willingness to Talk to Staff[b]		
Willing	9	47
Not willing	10	53
Expressed Need for Privacy[c]		
Yes	14	67
No	7	33
* Use of Verbiage That Has Special Meaning in Prison Setting--Argot[c]		
Yes	7	33
No	14	67

Table 1 (con't)

Variable	N	Percent
Advice to New Inmate Re: Communication[a]		
Keep to oneself	0	0
"Small talk" to a few "associates"	8	44
Open talk to a few friends and/or associates	5	28
Best to give no advice	5	28
Advice to Avoid Staff[c]		
Yes	16	84
No	3	16
Advice to Avoid Homosexuals[c]		
Yes	12	63
No	7	37
Advice to Avoid Discussion of Criminal Exploits[c]		
Yes	13	62
No	8	38
Communication With Cell Mate[b]		
Minimal/no communication	2	15
Small talk	7	54
Open discussion	4	31
Willingness to Maintain Associations Made in Prison on the Outside[b]		
Yes	7	44
No	9	56
Will Family Members Be Visiting?[a]		
Yes	9	43
No	12	57
Does Inmate Want Family/Friends to Visit?[a]		
Yes	12	57
No	9	43
*Are Inmates Expressions of Anger Different in the Institution Than They Are on the Streets?[a]		
Yes	7	33
No	14	67

Table 1 (con't)

Variable	N	Percent
*Assertiveness in Prison[b]		
Overassertive	1	20
Assertive	12	60
Underassertive	4	20
Reason for Caution in Communicating With Others in the Institution[b]		
Need for privacy	1	5
Security	4	20
Fear of trouble with the case	3	15
Lack of interest in others	1	5
Fear of trouble in a general sense	11	55
Maintenance of Communication with Parents[b]		
Yes	18	86
No	3	14
Maintenance of Communications With Siblings[b]		
Yes	17	85
No	3	15
Maintenance of Communication With Children[b]		
Yes	11	52
No	6	29
Not applicable -- no children	4	19

[a]Material was obtained through direct questioning/prompting

[b]Material was obtained through indirect questioning/prompting

[c]Material was offerred spontaneously by the subject

*Interrater reliability < 70%.

Table 2 Frequency and Percent Distribution of Inmates by Communication Patterns Outside of the Institutions

Variable	N	Percent
Is There a Significant Relationship With a Person Outside of the Institution?[a]		
Yes	15	71
No	6	29
*If Yes, Who is That Person(s)?[a]		
Wife/paramour	5	33
Girlfriend	1	7
Parent	1	7
Other relative	0	0
Friend	0	0
Wife/paramour + parent	8	53
Does the Inmate Expect Significant Relationship to Remain in Tact Until His Release?[b]		
Yes	9	45
Maybe	3	15
No	8	40
Evidence of Inmates' Use of Violence in Communicating With Family/Friends[b]		
Yes, physical abuse	11	52
Yes, extremely argumentative	2	10
No	8	38
Evidence of General Problems Communicating With Family/Friends[b]		
Yes	15	71
No	6	29
*Ease of Communicating With Authority Figures[b]		
Difficulty	7	35
No difficulty	13	65
Evidence of Poor Communication With Father or Father Figure During Childhood[b]		
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
Evidence of Poor Communication With Mother or Mother Figure During Childhood[b]		
Yes	9	43
No	12	57
Was Inmate Reared in a Violent Home[b]		
Yes, involving physical abuse of the inmate	10	48
Yes, extremely argumentative	1	5
No	10	48

Table 2 (con't)

Variable	N	Percent
Number of Friends on the Outside[a]		
Less than 3	15	71
3 to 10	2	10
More than 10	4	19
Number of "Associates" on the Outside[c]		
Less than 3	0	0
3 to 10	2	12
More than 10	15	88
Does the Inmate Spontaneously Discriminate Between Friends and Associates?[c]		
Yes	16	84
No	3	16
Criminal Orientation of Friends/Associates[a]		
Mostly criminal	5	25
Mixed	9	45
Mostly non-criminal	6	30
Were Friendships Formed With Persons Met in Legitimate Work?[b]		
Yes	11	65
No	6	35
Did Inmate Sever Communication With One or Both Parent?[b]		
Yes	3	15
No	17	85
Assertiveness Outside of Prison		
Overassertive	6	30
Assertive	7	35
Underassertive	7	35

[a]Material was obtained through direct questioning/prompting.

[b]Material was obtained through indirect questioning/prompting.

[c]Material was offered spontaneously by the subject.

*Interrater reliability < 70%

Table 3 Frequency and Percent Distribution of Inmates by Patterns and Characteristics Displayed During the Interview

Variable	N	Percent
Were Questions Answered on Point During the Interview?		
Yes	8	38
Sometimes off point	13	62
Were Inmate's Responses Verbose?		
Yes/sometimes	14	66
No	7	33
Were Inmate's Responses Overly Terse?		
Yes/sometimes	8	38
No	13	62
Did Inmate Appear Relaxed During the Interview?		
Yes	17	81
No	4	19
Did Inmate Evidence Extensive Use of Religious Terminology?		
Yes	2	10
No	19	90
Conversational Abilities		
Limited -- difficulty expressing thoughts clearly	5	24
Average	13	62
Well-spoken	3	14
Does Inmate Discuss Fears Re: Life in Prison?		
Yes	11	52
No	10	48
*Does Inmate Express Anger Re: Current Situation?		
Yes	14	67
No	7	33
Does Inmate's Responses Attempt to Present Good Side of His Character?		
Yes	10	48
No	11	52
Does Inmate Demonstrate Concern for Others?		
Yes/sometimes	14	67
No	7	33

Table 3 (con't)

Variable	N	Percent
*Does Inmate Demonstrate Empathy for Others?		
Yes/sometimes	7	33
No	14	67
*Self Image		
Low	6	29
Adequate	10	47
Aggrandized	5	24
*Locus of Control		
External	10	48
Mixed	8	38
Internal	3	14
Ability to Discuss Feelings and Coping Strategies		
Able/somewhat able	16	76
Not able	5	24
Optimism Re: Future After Release		
Optimistic/somewhat	18	86
Not optimistic	3	14
Can Something Be Gained from Prison?		
Yes	13	62
No	8	38
Guilt Re: Criminal Behavior		
Yes/some	7	33
No	14	67
Self-Disclosure		
Yes	13	65
No/some	7	35
Speech/Hearing Impediment		
Yes	1	5
Not Evident	19	95

*Interrater reliability < 70%.